

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

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O 181725Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2601

C O N F I D E N T I A L BELGRADE 1943

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR YO

SUBJ: YUGOSLAVIA AND THE GENEVA ME CONFERENCE

REF: LONDON 5761 AND PREVIOUS

1. IN LENGTHY DISCUSSION APR 18 YUGOSLAV FONSEC MINIC GAVE ME DETAILED RUNDOWN OF HIS IMPRESSIONS FROM HIS VISIT TO CAIRO AND DAMASCUS, FROM WHICH HE JUST RETURNED YESTERDAY.

2. HE SAID HE FOUND HIS TALKS USEFUL AND INTERESTING BUT SOMEWHAT DEPRESSING BECAUSE HE SENSED IN BOTH COUNTRIES A FOREBODING AND UNEASINESS STEMING PRIMARILY FROM SECRETARY KISSINGER'S INABILITY TO RECONCILE OPPOSING VIEWS, AND CONSEQUENT RECOGNITION THAT GENEVA IS NOW THE ONLY RECOURSE.

3. MINIC FOUND NO BITTERNESS TOWARD US IN EITHER COUNTRY -- WHICH HE CALLED REASSURING -- BUT THERE IS SOME RESENTMENT AGAINST US FOR STEPPING UP ARMS FLOW TO ISRAEL AS BOTH SADAT AND ASAD FEEL THIS ONLY WHETS APPETITE OF ISRAELI ELEMENTS OPPOSED TO INTERIM SOLUTION SOUGHT BY SECRETARY KISSINGER AND DISPOSED TO MILITARY SOLUTION. MINIC MADE CLEAR THAT SADAT HAS CONTINUING PROBLEMS WITH THE SOVIETS ALTHOUGH RELATIONS ARE IMPROVING. HE HOPED US WOULD NOT TRY TO EXPLOIT DIFFERENCES SINCE THIS WOULD ONLY COMPLICATE SADAT'S POLITICAL LIFE. I ASSURED MINIC WE HAD NOT DONE SO AND WOULD NOT IN FUTURE.

4. NEITHER SADAT NOR ASAD ARE OPTIMISTIC RE POSSIBLE SETTLEMENT
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AT GENEVA, BUT BOTH RECOGNIZE THERE ARE NO OTHER ALTERNATIVES

NOW. EGYPT PARTICULARLY EXPRESSED HOPE THAT CONFERENCE CO-CHAIRMEN WOULD DISCUSS AND AGREE ON BOTH A CONCEPTUAL APPROACH TO THE SUBSTANCE OF THE CONFERENCE, AND AN AGREED APPROACH ON PROCEDURAL MATTERS -- BOTH IN ADVANCE OF CONVENING OF THE CONFERENCE.

5. SADAT DISCUSSED AT LENGTH DESIRABILITY OF WIDENING COMPOSITION OF CONFERENCE BUT MADE NO FORMAL PROPOSALS -- JUST EXPRESSED IDEAS. HE SAID HE THOUGHT IT WOULD BE DESIREABLE TO INCLUDE THE UK AND FRANCE, AND YUGOSLAVIA, INDIA AND PERU AS REPRESENTATIVES OF THE NON-ALIGNED. SADAT MADE CLEAR THAT A CHANGE IN COMPOSITION WAS NOT A PRECONDITION TO RECONVENING THE CONFERENCE -- BUT IT WOULD BE THE FIRST ITEM OF BUSINESS AT THE CONFERENCE IF NOT PREVIOUSLY ADDRESSED. MINIC SAID WHILE THIS POINT WAS NOT RAISED IN DAMASCUS DISCUSSIONS, HE COULD NOT CONFIRM THAT FAILURE OF ASAD TO RAISE IT MEANT THE SYRIANS WERE SATISFIED WITH THE PRESENT COMPOSITION.

6. MINIC STRESSED THAT THE QUESTION OF COMPOSITION IS ASIDE FROM THE QUESTION OF PALESTINIAN PARTICIPATION -- THEY MUST BE REPRESENTED. THERE IS NO DOUBT IN THE MINDS OF THE YUGOSLAVS OR THEIR ARAB COLLEAGUES THAT THEY MUST BE THERE -- PREFERABLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RABAT FORMULA. MINIC SAID HE RECOGNIZED THIS IS A PROBLEM FOR ISRAEL, BUT SAID THEY MUST ACCEPT REALITIES AND IT IS UP TO THE US TO PERSUADE THEM THAT WITHOUT THE PALESTINIANS THE CONFERENCE COULD LEAD NOWHERE.

7. ON THE BASIS OF HIS TALKS WITH PALESTINIANS, MINIC SAID HE BELIEVED THAT IN THE CONTEXT OF AN OVERALL SETTLEMENT THE PALESTINIAN POSITION WOULD BE MUCH MORE MODERATE THAN THEIR STATEMENTS -- PAST AND PRESENT -- WOULD INDICATE.

8. FROM WHAT HE CALLED THE "MOZAIC" OF ARAB VIEWS AND HIS IMPRESSIONS , MINIC FELT REASONABLY SURE THAT BOTH EGYPT AND SYRIA BELIEVE THE US AND THE SOVIETS HAVE COME TO AGREEMENT ON AT LEAST THREE POINTS:

(A) BOTH WANT TO PREVENT A FURTHER OUTBREAK OF HOSTILITIES;

(B) BOTH ARE IN THE MIDDLE EAST TO STAY AND NEITHER COULD PUSH THE OTHER OUT; AND

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(C) BOTH OPPOSE THE EXPANSION OF THE COMPOSITION OF THE CONFERENCE.

9. IN RESPONSE TO HIS QUESTION I TOLD MINIC I WAS RELUCTANT TO ENTER INTO A SUBSTANTIVE DIALOGUE ON THE MIDDLE EAST SINCE I WAS NOT PRIVY TO THE POLICY REASSESSMENT WHICH HE KNEW WAS PRESENTLY UNDER WAY IN WASHINGTON. I SAID IT WAS MY PERSONAL VIEW THAT MINIC WAS RIGHT ON THE FIRST TWO POINTS. ON THE THIRD, I WAS REASONABLY SURE

SOME PEOPLE IN WASHINGTON WOULD OPPOSE EXPANSION ON THE GROUNDS THAT THE MORE VOICES AT THE CONFERENCE, THE MORE DIFFICULT TO REACH AGREEMENT.

10. MINIC CLOSED BY STRESSING THE DIRECT YUGOSLAV STAKE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE OUTCOME OF THE CONFERENCE. HE FELT IT IMPORTANT FOR ALL TO UNDERSTAND THAT WHILE YUGOSLAVIA IS PRO-ARAB, IT HAS NEVER BEEN AND WOULD NOT BE IN THE FUTURE HOSTILE TO ISRAEL. NORAL RELATIONS WOULD BE PROMPTLY RESTORED IN CONTEXT OF OVERA-ALL SETTLEMENT. DETENTE OFFERES BRIGHT PROSPECT -- CSCE AND SALT II INTER ALIA -- BUT MIDDLE EAST IS MENACING CLOUD, AND BOTH US AND SOVIETS SHOULD EXERT BEST EFFORTS TO BRING ABOUT SETTLEMENT.

11. RE CONFERENCE, HE SAID YUGOSLAVIA HAS TAKEN NO POSITION ON YUGOSLAVIA PARTICIPATION AT GENEVA. TITO AND MINIC BELIEVE THAT QUESTION DEPENDS FIRST ON THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE TWO CO-CHAIRMEN AND SECONDLY ON DISCUSSIONS WITHIN THE NON-ALIGNED. BUT EVEN IF NOT AN ACTIVE PARTICIPANT, THE HEAD OF THE YUGOSLAV GENEVA MISSION , AMBASSADOR LALOVIC, WOULD BE AN INTERESTED AND ENERGETIC OBSERVER. MINIC EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT US DEL WOULD BE PREPARED TO MEET WITH LALOVIC TO BRIEF HIM AND HEAR YUGOSLAVIA'S THOUGHTS.

12. IN EARLIER DISCUSSION APRIL 17, KARDELJ TOLD ME YUGOSLAVIA DID NOT THINK SADAT HAD HANDLED NON-ALIGNED PARTICIPATION QUESTION WELL AND SHOULD FIRST HAVE CONSULTED WITHIN NON-ALIGNED GROUP AND THEN WITH CO-HOSTS BEFORE PUBLICIZING THEIR PROPOSALS. KARDELJ SAID YUGOSLAVS DO NOT THUS CONSIDER SADAT INVITATION LEGITIMATE AND DO NOT PLAN TO ACT ON IT.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, VISITS, PEACE TALKS, GENEVA CONFERENCE
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 APR 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GarlanWA
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BELGRA01943
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750136-0972
From: BELGRADE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750435/aaaabgim.tel
Line Count: 145
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 75 LONDON 5761
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GarlanWA
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 18 JUN 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <18 JUN 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <18 JUL 2003 by GarlanWA>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: YUGOSLAVIA AND THE GENEVA ME CONFERENCE
TAGS: PFOR, YO, IS, (MINIC, MILOS)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006